



**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF COMMERCE**

**College of Business and Economics  
Department of Project Management**

**Assessment of Project Identification & Design practice:  
The Case of World vision Ethiopia**

**A project work submitted to Addis Ababa University school of  
Commerce in Partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Art in Project Management**

**By  
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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
June 2021

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## **DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented as a whole a degree in any university and all sources of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

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**Yidnekachew Wendaferew Asrat, June 2021**

## **CERTIFICATION**

This is to certify that Yidnekachew Wendaferew has carried out his research work on the topic entitled “Assessment of project identification and design practice: the case of World vision Ethiopia. The study is Original work and is suitable for the submission for the reward of MA Degree in project management.

Advisor: Mengistu Bogale (PhD) \_\_\_\_\_

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## List of Abbreviations

AAU	Addis Ababa University
CSO	Civil society Organization
DPA	Development Programmes Approach
FBO	Faith based organization
FDRE	Federal Democratic republic of Ethiopia
GAM	Grant Acquisition and Management
KII	key Informant interview
LEAP	Learning through Evaluation, accountability and Learning
NGO	Non-Government Organization
PMBoK	Project Management Body of Knowledge
SNNP	South nation, Nationality and People
WaSH	Water, sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization
WVE	World vision Ethiopia

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## **Abstract**

*In Ethiopia, there is a massive inflow of funding through unilateral and bilateral cooperation, majority of which is in the form of aid. For the past consecutive years, this inflow even exceeds the export earnings from coffee. Hence, these funding aimed at supporting projects and Programmes through non-government organizations like World vision Ethiopia, with the primary aim of the betterment of human life. However, how the financed projects are identified, selected and design remains to be vague. On the other hand, various studies shows that the success of*

*such projects are highly correlated with the Identification and design process it has undergoes through. This study aims to assess how projects are identified, rated and designed in Non-governmental organizations with specific instance of world vision Ethiopia. As a key assessment parameter, the study investigates the primary sources of project ideas, the role of key stakeholders, how project Problems are analyzed and Objective developed and the practice of setting project framework (design). The study employed a descriptive research design and a qualitative research approach, with semi-structured interviews serving as the primary data source and analysis of existing organization documents as the secondary source of data. The data was gathered using a semi-structured interview technique and Purposive sampling of key personnel's. 15 personnel's from three department dedicated for project design were interviewed. For clarification purpose, analysis was made based on Funding sources- Sponsorship and Grants. To analyses the data, tabulation and checklist of practice against industry standard is made. The finding of the study showed that majority of Grant funded project ideas are originally emanates from Donors. Moreover, the organization showed to have a good practice of engaging Stakeholders in project identification & design for both funding sources. Even more stakeholders do have a significant role to the extent of co leading project design for sponsorship-funded projects. In other finding, the organization does not deploy any project appraisal technique to compare alternative project ideas apart from the practice of undertaking cost per beneficiary analysis as a comparison tool. In other finding, the organization do make a comprehensive problem analysis that comply with the industry standard, in contrast to the highly compromised objective analysis reflected Interm of Organizational/managerial interference. All in all the practice of Project identification and design is challenged by both internal and external factors. Mainly narrow requirement by donors, Absence of exhaustive Government policy & Plan, absence of data for coherent analysis & decision-making and low capacity of local government to be the major one. On the other hand, internal challenge like Interdepartmental competition for resource and reactive grant acquisition strategy compromise the process. Finally, the study forwards recommendations like the need to have well-crafted fund acquisition strategy, tools and resources and more importantly the need to have a project ideas appraisal framework that is contextualized for Humanitarian industry.*

Key words; Project identification, Design, Grant, Sponsorship, NGO, Stakeholders

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the study

Every Project start as an idea, a need or opportunity evaluated, studied, and eventually developed into a project, which is managed through the project life cycle. Every project has a source, a beginning. Its inception could be to answer overarching problem, advance a new way of doing things, pursuit of knowledge etc. The key point is that the identification & design of it has long way to impact it's financing, implementation and ultimately its success. Nevertheless, not all projects are similar in nature, scope, purpose, implementation modality, and Stakeholders involvement & financing. Development projects whose interest are not profit making, has a peculiar process of undergoing through identification & Design process that differentiate it with other type of conventional for profit project.(Mario:2016)

Contemporary Project management body of Knowledge defines project & project Identification as “A project is a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result” PMBoK (5 th ed.) where as a Project identification means a process of finding out the most appropriate project from among the several investment opportunities. It concerned with the collection, compilation and analysis of economic data for the eventual purpose of locating possible opportunities for investment.”

However in case of Development Projects identification and Design phase involves Defining Needs, exploring Opportunities, analyzing the project environment, Cultivating connections & network, building trust, Developing collaborations and designing alternative project ideas are all part of the design process. As per the definition, especially with regard to project identification, much of project management body of knowledge focus on identifying a project idea with highest economic return. How about projects with long-term humanitarian/social outcomes? Development goal and social indicators? According to PMI, “public sector projects can have unique characteristics and notable complexities” (PMI 2020)

In many sectors that rely on a culture of project management, the project officially begins with the official approval of the project. This is usually not the case in the development sector, where the project life more commonly begins with a Project Identification and Design Phase. (Project

Management for development professionals; 2010). Time, money, and effort are committed in the Project Identification and Design Phase to define needs, investigate opportunities, analyze the project environment, cultivate connections, create trust, form collaborations, and design project options. The decisions taken during the Project Identification and Design Phase are linked to current initiatives and form the framework for the overall project. This phase is very important because it holds the key to the success or failure of project deliverables. According to Thomas, Delisle, Jugdev, and Buckle (2001), 30% of all projects are canceled in the middle of the process, while over 50% of finished projects wind up being 190 percent over budget and 220 percent late due to inadequate project identification management.

In Ethiopia Both Government and international NGO's are challenges to identify and select feasible development projects. These challenges are political involvement, lack of clear government policy, technical analysis incompetency, incompatible to the real need of global situation with government priorities, omission of key stakeholders in the identification process and lack of clear feasibility study (Firesenbet 2020). It is worth investigating the practice of Project identification and design taking into consideration the value it is capable of contributing to millions of Ethiopian and amount of money invested through projects every year. The national bank of Ethiopia's (NBE) annual report for the years of 2008/9 to 2012/13 shows that the remittances of NGOs is greater than the export of coffee-in 2012/13- **745** million usd Vs **1.475** billion USD.

This study shall seek to look into the practice of project identification and design practice in light of key industry parameters- with specific instance of World vision Ethiopia. Furthermore it investigates how project ideas are sourced, what roles stakeholders play, how problems are analyzed and objectives developed, what challenges are paused in the process and what lesson can be learnt from to improve for other projects and Organizations.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The performance problems of project cost overrun, time delay, and quality deficiency either are caused by in selection, Design, execution or control phase of the project and other factors. However, according to Richard (2012) one of the main reasons of project failure in developing countries is lack of effective project identification & Design process.

Hence according to PMBoK,(2013), the project initiation and Design processes are highly important; and project execution without proper/poor/ development of a project plan often causes delays, high costs and general execution problems in the project. For development

projects context, project identification and design process could be unpacked in to four interrelated and yet important separate processes undertaken with the involvement of web of stakeholders. Project ideas sourcing and screened, Collection of assessment data, analysis of assessment data (problem analysis, stakeholder analysis, Objective analysis) & crafting project logic Model. Each process is very important for the ultimate success of any project.

According to Henry (2016) stakeholder's involvement during project initiation stage and stakeholder mapping as well as stakeholder analysis tool influence the success of project management. This was due to stakeholder involvement along project life led to sustainability of the project and identification of relevant gaps. On the other hand, there is a saying "A problem well stated is a problem half solved" signifying the importance of understanding and analyzing the problem before prompting for any solution. Hence Discenza, R. & Forman, J. B. (2007) formulate that one way to almost guarantee project failure is to begin work without clear Project objectives and goals that arises from weak formulation of problem and subsequent recommendation of objectives.

As observed by Firesenbet (2020), in Ethiopia Both Government and international NGO's are challenges to identify and select feasible development projects. These challenges are political involvement and lack of clear government policy, technical analysis incompetency, incompatible to the real need of global situation with government priorities, omission of key stakeholders in the identification process and lack of clear feasibility study. Perhaps the application of limited sets of project management knowledge & tools in to their project management might have contributed for the failure (Addisu; 2018)

## **Research Questions**

This research is conducted to assess the Project identification & Design practice at World vision Ethiopia. The researchers tries to answer

1. What is the current project Identification & Design practice of the Organization for the two funding stream; Sponsorship and Grants ?
2. How and to what extent stakeholders are involved in identification & design process? Does the process capture the actual need of Project participants?
3. What is the practice of project Objective setting? To what extent does it maintain Objectivity?
4. What are the major challenges in relation to the project identification & design process?

## **1.3 Research Objectives**

### **1.3.1 General objectives**

It can genuinely be established that the success or failure of any project or program can be strongly linked to the Identification & design Process it has undergone through. Hence, the primary goal of this study is to investigate the project Identification and planning practices of World Vision Ethiopia.

### **1.3.2 Specific objectives**

- 1 To assess the existing practice of Project idea sourcing , screening, selection, collection & analysis of assessment data and designing Project logic for the two funding streams; sponsorship and Grant.
- 2 To Assess the Organizations practice of stakeholders engagement & Management.
- 3 To assess the practice of project Objective setting & establishment of Project framework.
- 4 To identify key challenges exhibited in the project identification & design practice.

## **1.4 Significance of the study**

There is a famous connotation among project managers, which goes “an assurance of acquiring new project is executing the existing one well”. The practice of project identification & design is very crucial in determining project success. Moreover, any development organization’s performance in project identification & design is directly correlated to sustainable funding- which is the bloodline of their survival. The research finding aimed at helping the organization by providing tangible and concrete evidence about what the current project identification and design practice looks like, what effect the identification and design practice has on the project's success and to an extent tries to shed light on the dynamics of twenty first century development project design requirements . This would help the organization & other peer organizations to identify the area of weakness and strength related to project identification and design. Besides this research can be a foundation for further study in the organization or as a reference for other studies and other organizations in the same context with World vision Ethiopia may use the finding of this research to improve their identification and design process practice.

On the other hand, the research would contribute to the academic world in showing some of the dynamics of project management for non-profit organization, which has not been properly studied.

## **1.5 Scope of the Study**

Different Development projects have different identification and design processes. Its variability depends on Donors requirement, Origin of project idea (donor driven Vs Org. driven), origin of funding country, nature of the project (Development Vs Emergency), funding source (sponsorship Vs Grants) etc. Keeping in mind that the organization currently manages more than 300 projects, the study only focus on the organizational processes rather than seeing it in the scope of individual projects. However, in attempting to answer key research questions the paper navigate through exemplary programmes/projects that was successfully won as well as declined ones.

On the other hand, given frequent restructuring & followed business process modification the organization undergone through in the past three decades, the scope of the study limited to the late strategic period of 2016-2020.

## **1.6 Limitation of the Study**

The research only addresses Project identification & design processes by sampling few successful and declined project ideas. Perhaps this might limit the extent of the conclusion to represent the whole organization as well as project initiation/design process of nonprofit Development projects. Moreover, Limitation in accessing documentation of informal project initiation process especially negotiation among and between organizations through virtual meetings like skype, teams, zoom etc. was not analyzed. On the other, hand Difficult to accesses all project documentation (secondary data) due to confidentiality of records paused another limitation.

The last but not the least Lack of Organizational learning documents especially for Project ideas that has failed was another limitation of the study.

## **1.7 Organization of the Study**

This research report is divided into five chapters, Chapter one includes an introduction to the study and project, a statement of the problem, the relevance of the investigation, research objectives, questions, and the study's scope and constraints. The review of relevant literature is presented in Chapter 2. Various literatures have been cited to provide the study's foundation as well as theoretical and practical information. The study technique and methods needed to collect and analyze data from which findings are obtained are detailed in Chapter 3. The

purpose of Chapter 4 is to provide an analysis of the data collected using the data collection procedures and tools described in the methodology section. The fifth chapter is devoted to the discussion of the summary, conclusion, and recommendation. The study's references and interview tools are appended.

# **CHAPTER TWO**

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **2 Introduction**

This section will present the review of relevant literature in the area of Project identification and design with especial emphasis given to non- profit-making projects. Key areas to be covered include conceptual clarification, the fundamentals of project identification and design, its process group, main features, challenge & prospect and existing practices.

#### **2.1 Theoretical literature Review**

Before discussing the details of identification of projects, it will be appropriate first to briefly see the fundamental elements necessary for understanding project and Project management.

##### **2.1.1 What is Project?**

PMBOK (2013) Defines project as a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product, service or result. The transient nature of projects denotes that they have a defined start and end date. When the project's deliverables have been completed, or when the project is terminated because its objectives will not or cannot be realized, or when the project's necessity no longer exists, the project has ended. However, if it is not unique and somehow routine, it will not be a project rather than production (Robert; 2014). Furthermore, it is time limited in the sense that it is only transient and not infinite. It will not render the attributes of a project if the start and end dates are unknown. As a result, it will not be a project. One thing that need to be noted is that it has scope, time, cost and quality parameter.

Like organic entities, projects have a life cycle. From a slow beginning, they progress to a buildup of size, then peak, begin to decline and finally must be terminated by some due date. Also like Organic entities, they often resist termination. Some projects end by being phased out into the normal ongoing operations of mother organization (Meredith & Manthel (2009)

In General differentiating project with regular operation could be viewed in scope of projects key characteristics of (Meredith & Manthel (2009)

**1. Uniqueness:** though the desired results may have been attained somewhere, they are at least unique to this organization. In addition to the presence of risk, this characteristics means that projects, by their nature, cannot completely reduced to routine operation. Deliverables of this unique project is meant to address problem or need analyzed before project start.

**2. Interdependence:** Typically, these interactions take the form of competition for scarce resources between projects. While such interproject interactions are common, projects always interact with the parent organization's standard, ongoing operations. Although the functional departments of an organization (marketing, finance, manufacturing, and the like) interact with one another in regular, patterned ways, the patterns of interaction between projects and these departments tend to be changeable.

**3. Resource:** Projects have limited budgets, both for personnel as well as for other resources. Often the budget is implied rather than detailed, particularly concerning personnel, but it is strictly limited.

**4. Conflict:** Often the budget is implied rather than detailed, particularly concerning personnel, but it is strictly limited. More serious, with the growing proliferation of projects, is the project-versus-project conflict for resources within multi project organizations.

## **2.1.2 Project Management (PM)**

GIZ Manual for Project management (2016) define Project management as “the process of combining systems, techniques, and people to complete a project within established goals of time, budget, and quality. Similarly PMBOK® Guide (2013, p. 10), puts PM “as application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet the project requirements”. As we can understand from the definition, Project management requires people, resource and system for the attainment of specific goal/deliverable. Furthermore, project management utilizes the systems approach to management by having functional personnel, the vertical hierarchy assigned to a specific project and the horizontal hierarchy (Kezner 2009) that is one key area that project management departs from program management.

Although project management principles, best practices, and standards are applicable to a wide range of projects, different industries need to adapt best practices to their particular projects. In fact, tailoring is one of the cornerstones in all respected project management methodologies. (Mario 2016). Project Management for non-profit has a peculiar characteristic that differentiate

it from for profit regular projects. First, Key project staffs, project deliverable, and delivery mechanism/methodology/ is highly influenced by donor. There are various instances where by donor intervene in selection of project staffs and structure and management style. I.e. from Gender lens, staff Nationality etc. Secondly, Stakeholders' engagement/involvement is comparatively high as compared to other projects. Third, Project management modalities especially costs are seriously monitored by Governments. Forth, the majority of NGOs depend on volunteers, posing new challenges to project human resource management. Moreover, hierarchies tend to be less structured, forcing project managers to rely much more on influence and leadership. Fifth, Budget life cycles and finance management are usually less predictable because NGOs depend on donations and grants. Restricted funds, constraints, and legal regulations pose another layer of complexity in non-profit project management. Sixth, Strategic planning, governance processes, and key performance indicators are adopted by high maturity NGOs. However, reality is different for a large number of NGOs, negatively impacting portfolio and project management with shifting priorities. Last but not least, Stakeholder management is crucial because nonprofit organizations frequently interface with government, private companies, regulatory agencies, communities, and more.

In general, even though the development sector approach to project life cycle management is a bit different from others, the holistic definition and categorization by Jason (2006) would serve our purpose. Accordingly, the project life cycle consists of four phases:

**Project initiation:** a business problem or opportunity is recognized at this phase, and a business case with multiple solution options is established. After that, a feasibility study is undertaken to see if each alternative addresses the business problem, and then a final proposed solution is presented.

**Project planning;** Outlining the activities, tasks, dependencies, and timeframe, as well as the resource plan, budgetary plan, quality plan, acceptance strategy, and procurement strategy are all part of this phase.

**Project execution:** This phase entails putting the strategy in place that was produced during the project-planning phase.

**Project closure:** Project closure entails giving the customer the final deliverables, handing over project documentation to the business, terminating supplier contracts, releasing project resources, and informing all stakeholders of the project's completion.

### 2.1.3 What is Project Identification & Design?

According to PMI (2020) Definition, within an organization, project identification is a repeatable process for recording, validating, prioritizing, and approving candidate initiatives/ideas. Moreover, Project design is an early phase of the project where a project's key features, structure, criteria for success, and major deliverables are all planned out. The aim is to develop one or more designs that can be used to achieve the desired project goals. It is a customary practice in many non-governments Organization to merge these two processes and undertake as one aiming at delivering Project proposal for funding.

According to(PMD:2010) Most Development Organization and projects follow the five step project life cycle management approach of which **Identification** is the primary one followed by **preparation, appraisal, implementation and evaluation.**

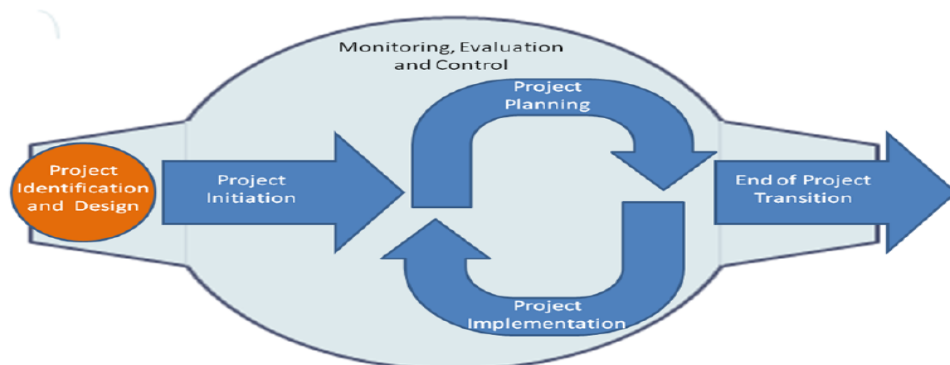


Figure 1. Project lifecycle

As depicted in the diagram above project identification & design phase is the initial and very crucial step of any project. In the development sector, this phase is indispensable in helping Organizations answer critical question” are we doing the right project? Where will the project be implemented? Who are the people who benefit? What are the expected outcomes? What is the logic for the intervention? What are the project's most significant risks? What is the method for approaching a project without delaying it? (GIZ Manual for Project management, 2016). Similarly, for profit making projects it is a scoping stage where an entrepreneur/organization undergoes through identification exercise to craft a project with a limited means and unlimited ends(AAU, project identification, analysis & appraisal module:2015)

One of the reasons for the importance of the project identification and design phase is that it provides the most cost-effective opportunity to answer fundamental questions regarding the project specifications. Moreover, this phase is very important for any organization because it is

the stage where the project foundation is laid in terms of scope, budget and time. Hence it is cost effective should accommodating change is needed that the later stage of project life cycle.

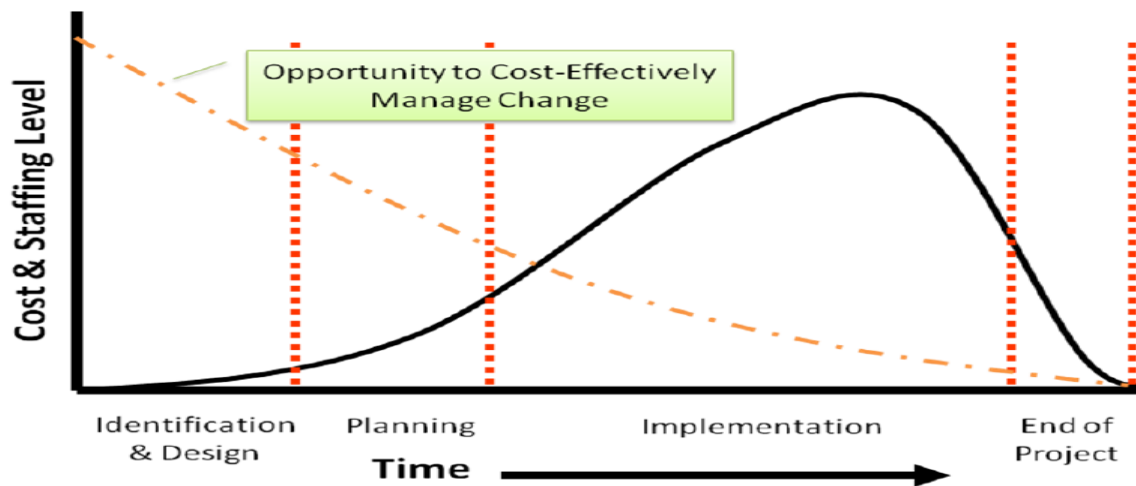


Figure 2 opportunity to cost effectively managing change

However, once project implementation begins (personnel is hired, activities commence, budgets are set, and deliverables begin to take shape), the cost of modifying project parameters rises, making these adjustments considerably more difficult to manage. As a result, during the project identification and design phase, it is critical that the project manager collect and process data to inform these decisions, and that the general approach to this phase is one that is open to creative exploration, brainstorming, visioning, and strategy discussion. These procedures are frequently carried out prior to a project's official clearance and, in some companies, are viewed as a separate project with its own set of phases. The project identification and design phase, on the other hand, frequently forms its own process group and project phase area (PMD; 2010)

According to IUCN (2014), early in the project life cycle, the project team can start developing the norm of broad stakeholders' participation in its approach and interactions throughout the project identification and design phase. The project team can use participative ways to define challenges, identify alternatives, decide strategy, and sketch the project logic. While more time and resources may be required for participatory project design and development, the end outcomes will benefit from multiple advantages. To begin, Stakeholders have the ability to direct the development of their own projects. Moreover, the final project design will be stronger

than it would have been if everyone had contributed. At last, there is a sense of ownership among communities

### 2.1.4 Steps in Project Identification & Design

Despite the variability of approaches among various development organization in the process followed while undergoing project identification and design phase (PMD (2010), FAO (2014) GIZ (2016), IUCN (2014) we can broadly categorize the process under four pillars.

Using these four pillars organizations in collaboration with key stakeholders, partners, donors and Community groups collaborate to achieve their goals

1. Select a project concept/idea
2. Gather information for the assessment
3. Examine the results of the assessment
4. Create a project's logic

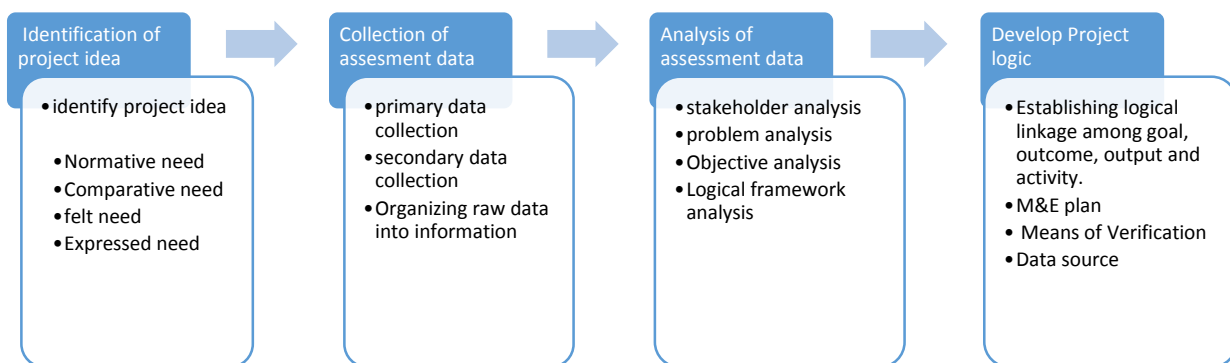


Figure 3. Steps in project identification & design

#### 2.1.4.1 Identifying Project Ideas

Development projects begin as an idea a need or opportunity is identified, examined, analyzed, and eventually evolved into a project plan that is managed throughout the project life cycle. Where do ideas, on the other hand, come from? Who is responsible for identifying needs and opportunities? What kind of evidence do you need to back up your claims? Analyzing the present actual situation can be ‘problem based’ or ‘opportunity based’ (Tsige: 2013)

According to project Management for development Professionals guide (2010), whether explicit or tacit, definitions of need are rationing systems that determine who gets what?

Individuals, members of social, and interest groups, on the other hand, have dramatically diverse opinions about what constitutes a "need" and what does not. People's assessments of need are frequently highly subjective and defy objective consensus. If, on the other hand, the requirements are ambiguous the project will be compromised.

Contemporary discussion with regard to identification of needs mainly emanates from 1972's Johnathan Bradshaw's Work. Bradshaw indicated four methods of defining and measuring needs.

1. **Normative Needs:** are articulated/defined by the observations of experts, professionals, and consultants who compare the current situation to a set of professional or expert norms, either implicitly or explicitly. A nutritionist, for example, may use globally recognized WHO indicators to determine the prevalence of malnutrition in a certain location

2. **Comparative Needs:** The disparity in people's access to resources is used to determine comparative needs. This approach recognizes that need is a relative notion, and that any discussion of need must be conducted in the context of a comparison of persons.

3. **Felt needs:-** are defined by an individual's or a community's perception of need, as well as any disparity between what they perceive their position should be and what they believe it should be. A perceived need is likely to be subjective, and it is best stated as a "Want". Individual knowledge and aspirations, which may be inaccurate and/or unaffordable, are inevitably influenced by felt need. Mothers, for example, may verbally abuse their children.

4. **Expressed needs;** - are described as a perceived need that has been expressed as a demand by an individual or a group. The term "expressed needs" refers to what can be deduced about community needs by seeing how people use services. Families, for example, may be dissatisfied not just with the mess and unhealthy circumstances that arise from a lack of sanitary sanitation, but they are also beginning to embrace sanitation systems.

#### **2.1.4.2 Collect Assessment Data**

According to PMD (2010) once a project concept has been identified, the following stage is to elucidate the problem further, gathering further data to either validate that there is a need to support the initial project concept, recommend changes before moving forward, or incline to a more feasible project concept. Depending on the scope, anticipated budget, and nature of the

concept, assessment data collection could be deep & comprehensive or micro. While a single point of reference (a donor, an expert, a community-based organization, or village members) may have identified the initial project idea, the assessment process will serve to explore the initial problem definition from multiple perspectives and confirm whether others share the perception of need. However, assessment can also be carried out when a project's scope is expanded or changed.

Different form of assessment might be conducted at different milestone of the project life cycle including (but not limited to) the following

1. Policy analysis;- desk level assessment of existing national, regional policies, regulation and procedures that might affect potential project intervention.
2. Collecting socio-economic information on the target community (and other stakeholders);
3. Community resource mapping
4. Qualitative data aiming at understanding the communities' knowledge, behaviors and attitudes;
5. Mapping the geography and bio-physical assets of an intervention area (Resource mapping)

Collecting and Evaluating assessment data aids businesses in determining whether a project is required and if so, what type of project is most appropriate, as well as the project deliverables and resources required to meet them. While assessment is done as part of project design process, it is necessary that communities be empowered to understand their reality and explore the potential for collaboration with other Groups.

When conducting assessment three types of data may be required Primary (qualitative, quantitative) and secondary.

### **2.1.4.3 Analyze Assessment Data**

#### **Project analysis**

This is very important step in designing and shaping the project idea. Once assessment data is collected, it is of no use unless proper interpretation is given. The analysis process entails reflection and study of the manner in which specific problems or issues are linked to one another, as well as investigating the underlying causes and repercussions of those problems or

difficulties. A thorough examination of assessment data ensures that an organization does not design and plan a project solely to address the symptoms, but also to address the core causes of the symptoms.

At this stage Key analysis to be conducted in a sequential manner are

#### **A. Stakeholder analysis: Who are we?**

FAO (2014) Defines Stakeholders as individuals, groups or organizations who have an interest or stake in a project. They may be direct or indirect interests and positive or negative. Their stake in the project may be in terms of their rights or duties or they may be affected by the outcome. For process projects, which encourage learning from experience, and listening to participants, engaging with stakeholders from the outset is particularly important.

Moreover, understanding of stakeholders, including identification, their positive or negative impact on the project requires deployment of techniques and tools- stakeholder analysis.

Stakeholder analysis is a technique of systematically gathering and analyzing quantitative and Qualitative information to determine whose interest should be taken into account throughout the project. It Identifies interests, expectations, influences of stakeholders & relate them to the purpose of the project PMBOK (2013). However, it has to be noted that Stakeholder analysis needs to be done with a variety of stakeholders to explore and verify perceptions by cross-reference (EIF-Handbook for Project identification and design, 2011).

According to PMD (2010), the major stakeholder is determined before the project's objectives are determined as a result of the stakeholder analysis at this stage. This guarantees that the problem analysis is focused on the most important stakeholders.

Effective engagement is likely to improve effectiveness, efficiency, ownership, responsiveness, transparency and accountability and improve equity. Participation is likely to have many benefits. Nevertheless, it is not a guarantee of success. Achieving participation is not easy. Participation can be time consuming and it can be painful if it involves a change in practice; Working out who needs to be involved and what their input/interest is likely to be needs to be done as early as possible, but should also be repeated in the later stages of the project to assess whether the original situation has changed and whether the involvement of groups is being adequately addressed.

In general, stakeholder analysis helps to Identifying stakeholders involved in the project, explore the interest of stakeholders and Mapping the influence of stakeholders.

Stakeholders can be categorized and analyzed into (EIF-Handbook for Project identification and design, 2011).

### **I. Primary stakeholders (Often the *WHY* or target population of a project.)**

They are generally the vulnerable. They are the reason why the project is being planned. They are those who benefit from or are adversely affected by the project. They may be highly dependent on a resource, service, or area (e.g. a neighborhood, a health clinic) for their well-being. Usually they live in or very near the area in question. They often have few options when faced with change.

**II. Secondary stakeholders (Often the *HOW* of reaching the Primary Stakeholders)-** These include **all other** people and institutions with a stake or interest or intermediary role in the resources or area being considered. Being secondary does not mean they are not important; some secondaries may be vital as means to meeting the interests of the primaries.

To conduct stakeholder analysis we can deploy various tools- especially the enlisted two are often used

- I. **Venn diagrams:** it is a tool that we use to analyze & depict relationship between and among vital influential stakeholders.
- II. **The Stakeholder Analysis Matrix** In order to further elaborate, explain and communicate the interest, capability and prospective action of project stakeholders the matrix use the result from venn diagram. A comprehensive tool aids managerial decision and action

### **B. Problem analysis: - Where are we now?**

Projects aim to address a problem or constraint. It is very important to understand the root causes of the problem or constraint, how it affect stakeholders, how it contributes to the bigger problem, how it is related to each other, and how to focus on tackling them. Moreover, the purpose of this exercise is to develop a relationship of mutual respect and agreement between key stakeholders and to reach a position of collective understanding of the underlying issues and problem so that they can move onto the next stage. There is no single right way to do this and there are a number of options for working through the process.

A very essential tool for systematically analyzing the root cause of a given problem is Problem tree method. It is the process of identifying the central problem, given collected data and information available. Problem tree analysis is a simplified but reliable representation of reality that identifies not only the main problem to be addressed, but also its effects, as well as the underlying issues and root causes that contribute to the current situation. However, it is of crucial importance to reach on consensus among stakeholders, on the list of key problems.

Problem trees start with a 'starter problem,' which can be identified through an open brainstorming session with stakeholders or pre-identified by preliminary/micro analysis of existing data. The process of elaborating the succeeding problem tree is accomplished once the initial problem has been recognized. The guiding question behind the logic of the problem tree is 'What causes that?' If there are two or more causes combining to produce an effect, they are placed at the same level in the diagram. Cause-effect arrows are used to connect the levels of the problem tree (PMD 2010) it should be highlighted that the appreciative inquiry methodology is a feasible alternative to a problem-based approach. Appreciative inquiry is a positive, asset-based approach that aims to identify/analyze past and present strengths, successes, and potentials as a foundation for going forward. As a facilitation tool appreciative inquiry is often used by development Organizations to ignite and showcase the possibilities and resources that is available within the community rather than emphasizing on what is lacking (EIF 2011)

### **C. Objectives Analysis; - Where do we want to be?**

Once we clearly understand the central problems and its root causes, the next step would be to produce an Objective of the project by reversing the analyzed problem. Hence, Organizations deploy various tools to properly analyze the objective. Just like the problem tree - objective tree is the simplest and most often used one where by identified problems are transformed into positive objective statement. While the problem tree depicts cause and effect interactions, the objective tree depicts relationships from means to an end. When crafted into standardized logical framework (LFA) Objectives can be named as purpose, Goal or Outcome. (ELF; 2011)

While the objectives tree might outline a clear and comprehensive intervention strategy for a project, it is seldom the case that an organization can implement all the activities outlined in the tree. At this point, consideration of three critical strategic questions is important.

1. Which of the objectives tree's elements will be addressed by the project intervention?
2. Which aspects will be excluded from the project's scope?
3. What are the inclusion/exclusion criteria to be utilized in making these decisions?

Hence Trade-offs must be assessed that arise between multiple and conflicting objectives (Jason 2006)

The objective tree maps a comprehensive intervention strategy that should be performed for the attainment of the project goal. However, not all aspect of the objective tree would be translated into project deliverables, for the mere reason of resource, time and capacity limitation. Hence, organizations choose by considering important question of

On the other hand, FAO (2011) Project life cycle management technical guide underlines the fact that although setting project objectives appears to be straight forward, the method may reveal information that necessitates reviewing the root issue. Overall, an iterative strategy may be required. Initial assessment of objectives may lead to additional research and data collecting, as well as stakeholder consultation.

#### **D. Conceiving alternative solutions**

As per FAO (2011) guidance, Examination and refining of alternative strategies must not be neglected, though there will always be pressures to move rapidly on to detailed project design and appraisal. If the project identification team is pressed into adopting a proposal that looks to be viable at first glance without further investigation, following preparation is reduced to merely making the best case for that proposal. Decisions made at this stage can have far-reaching consequences: some are likely to be irreversible, regardless of how thorough the subsequent preparation and appraisal, whereas others may have a significant impact on the project's quality and development impact. There is no substitute for doing things correctly the first time. When it comes to project identification, it is critical to get to the root of the problem rather than creating a project that only addresses the symptoms.

Alternative solution conception requires the most creative and imaginative thinking from project planners, as well as an inter-disciplinary approach and interaction with the broadest possible constituency. 'All project formulators should remember to 'open up the alternatives.' Only a few problems have a single solution. Choosing between alternative forms of intervention or project strategy will be a part of the project identification and planning phase at first.

It has to be noted that these options are not always mutually exclusive. It is possible that a combination of measures will be the most effective. In general, sticking to what works and

build on successes in opening up the alternatives, it is useful to consider as many different routes as possible, some will be discarded almost immediately, but others may introduce new ideas and insights, which may contribute positively to the final project design.

The design team should considering conducting the enlisted processes to better choose among alternatives. First Creating a list of as many possible alternatives as possible- The range of alternatives is likely to expand if ideas are gathered from a variety of sources. Second, examining each option with the goal of eliminating some and integrating others. Consideration of each alternative at this point will strengthen the reasoning for and breadth of the one that is ultimately chosen. lastly, Selection of promising alternatives for preliminary formulation.

As a rule of thumb, a multidisciplinary team should ideally carry out the process of seeking alternative solutions.

#### **2.1.4.4 Develop the Project Logic**

The next phase in the logical framework analysis technique is to further construct the project logic once the assessment and analysis processes are complete. The logical framework (log frame) matrix is one of the most important tools for determining the logic of development initiatives. The logical framework is a planning, monitoring, and evaluation tool for projects. The Log frame approach is a simple structure for expressing project components and logical links between a set of means and a set of ends. It is a method for systematically establishing and presenting a project's goals, demonstrating how those goals will be met, and identifying the major external elements that could jeopardize the project's success. It involves definition of the project inputs, activities, and outputs that lead to the achievement of objectives (FAO: 2011). The development sector uses various version of the logic model. Hence, their variability is shown by the terms used to identify main deliverables.

Logical frameworks are intended to serve as (PMD; 2010):

1. Organizing project thinking and discovering linkages between resources, activities, and project outcomes using systematic procedures;
2. a way to explain and share the project intervention logic in a visual way;
3. a tool for identifying and evaluating risk in the proposed project design and
4. a tool for tracking progress using indicators and verification sources.

It is a strong case to be made that this is the most crucial stage of the cycle. If the most viable concepts' potential is neglected during identification, there is little chance that they will be

rediscovered later, when the focus turns from assessing choices to filling in the details of a specific proposal. Aborting or drastically revising a project's planning once it is started can be costly and challenging.

Clarity of purpose is critical in project development; project objectives must be presented in such a way that specific targets may be set if possible. The progress toward these goals should be quantifiable. Monitoring throughout deployment, as well as ongoing and post review, will be made easier using log frame analysis.

It is also worth noting that the notion of project identification being transparent, totally technocratic, and objective is not always accurate. Project identification can be a highly political process, including powerful parties that compete and bargain in an attempt to influence public policy.

## **2.2 Empirical literature Review**

### **2.2.1 Non-Governmental Organizations in Ethiopia**

The emergence of NGOs in Ethiopia was associated with the tragic famine of the early 1970s in the northern part of the country, and the aim was to provide relief and rehabilitation services (Deribe; 2016). Until the end of the 1970s, there were not more than 25 NGOs in the country. In the later 1980s –during the *Derg* regime – the number of NGOs reached around 70. Immediately after the overthrow of the *Derg* regime by the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) in 1992, the participation of NGOs in development and governance issues grew unprecedentedly, both in number and in the scope of their activities. Among those, world vision Ethiopia could be mentioned. World Vision Ethiopia began its first intervention in Ethiopia in 1971 with relief and opened the Ethiopia office in 1975. Relief, rehabilitation and small community development projects dominated the decade that followed. During the 1984/85 drought, World Vision Ethiopia participated in a massive relief operation.

In 2009, the FDRE issued proclamation No. 621/2009 to manage the registration and regulation of charities and societies in the country (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2009). This law has been blamed for being too restrictive in terms of fundraising activities, CSO registration, strict government surveillance, etc. Consequently, the number of registered CSOs in Ethiopia dropped from 3,822 prior to 2009, to 1500 in 2013. (<https://project-e.eu/history-of-ngo-ethiopia/>). Hence, These “development organizations” undertake a broad spectrum of projects pertaining to, among other things, water supply, environmental protection, health care services, and livelihood interventions.(Aga;2016).

However, following the advent of Dr. Abiy ahimed reform in 2019, the much complained CSO proclamation is amended and replaced by new one, proclamation 1113/2019, which has relaxed some of critical curfews in NGO operation.

Generally speaking, NGOs in Ethiopia have built up valid development experience, especially in working with poor categories of people such as the landless, cattle less, widows and orphans, in ways that are complementary to state and private sector activity. The relationship between Government and International NGOs is very complex (Firesenbet 2020) Several resources show that the national, as well as local government, acknowledges the positive impact and value of NGO activities. However, at the same time, there is some disagreement between Government and International NGOs (primarily due to political reasons) especially the issue of advocacy on the right issue; it assumed that the responsibility of the government. This disagreement seems to have been reflected and solved in the new proclamation 1113/2019.(FDRE negarit Gazeta, proclamation 1113/2019).

### **2.2.2 The Practice of Project identification and Design at NGO's in Ethiopia**

Development projects are pivotal in the field of international aid to developing countries. These projects are the main instrument through which international aid is directed to developing countries. Different from emergency projects whose objective is providing immediate assistance to populations hit by wars or natural disaster, development projects usually take place in more stable contexts with the aim of improving living conditions in terms of economic conditions, education, or health ( Ruggero, Paulo & Dario;2012).

As has been discussed in detail, Project identification is very crucial step in project life cycle management when comes to assuring project success. Especially for development projects, the deliverables are highly correlated with properly understanding the problem first-identification. Hence, in development sector it often said that failing to understand the problem is 50+ failure is delivering any of the project outcome. However, application of Project management knowledge area including project identification is by far a reality in Ethiopia NGO environment. As observed by Addisu (2018) NGO's use a restricted set of project management knowledge and tools, necessitating the development of project managers' capability through state-of-the-art project management training and education of their key staff.

Development projects major source of project ideas are government policy and strategy, community felt, expressed, normative and comparative need, donor interest, CSO & FBO

interest etc. Techniques like attribute listing, brainstorming, and Delphi technique are useful for improving the creativity at individual and group level to identify project ideas.

Different organizations do follow different identification procedure and methodology in identification. As per the study conducted by Firesenbet (2020), assessing project identification and design practice of government and non-government organization in Ethiopia, found out that 82.1% of the respondents' source of the project idea is from government policies and plan. The rest of respondents use multiple sources a combination of either of these such as from government policies and plan, from technical specifications, from local leaders, from entrepreneurs, analysis of the performance of existing industries, the examination of the input-outputs of various industries, review of imports and exports, and investigation of local materials and resources.

Furthermore, Firesenbet (2020) research investigate criteria used by NGO's to screen project concepts and the result is similar with the source of project idea. 39.3% of respondents use the "consistency with government priorities" as the soul screening criteria. This criterion also used by the rest of respondents 60.7% in combination with other screening criteria such as the reasonableness of cost, acceptability of risk level, availability of inputs, compatibility with the interest, personality, and resources of the entrepreneur, and fitting to the plan for community development and capacity building.

Even though the literature around project identification practice in NGO environment is limited, the existed one shows that project identification practice has great deal of influence on project success.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This chapter report a summary of research methodology and research design that is used to assess the project identification and design practice of World vision Ethiopia. It mainly provide answer to issues such as how the needed data will be collected? What is the target population? What are the sample and sampling techniques? What are the data collection and analysis tool? Method of Presentation and ethical consideration.

#### **3.1 Description of the study area**

The study is conducted in Addis Ababa at World vision Ethiopia Head quarter. The study area is chosen because more than 90% of project initiation and design activities are done at Head office level. The Organizational structure responsible for the task, Grant acquisition and management (GAM) & MEAL unit perform the task mainly at Head office level.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The research design defines the researchers' plan of searching answer for the research questions raised and find solution for the problem. In fact, the research design is the conceptual framework for conducting research. It lays up the framework for data collection, measurement, and analysis. As a result, the design comprises a description of what the researcher will perform, starting with developing the research questions and ending with the operational implications of the final data and population analysis. Creswell (2009)

The appropriate research design is selected based on the purpose of the study. Hence, Descriptive research type is chosen among the three type of research; Explanatory, Exploratory and Descriptive. Descriptive research aimed simply at describing phenomena and is not particularly concerned with understanding why behavior is the way it is. John et al (2007). It focus on answering the how, what, when and where Questions rather than the why. It is also useful where it is not possible to test and measure the large number of samples needed for more quantitative type of experimentation (Glass & Hopkins; 1984)

### **3.3 Research Approach**

In the study Qualitative, research approach is used, because the goal of the study, which is to assess the project identification & design practice of world vision Ethiopia, can be measured objectively. According to Creswell (2009), qualitative research methods rely on text and image data, have unique step in data analysis and draw on diverse design.

### **3.4 Data type and source**

#### **Data type**

When dealing with Qualitative data the researcher deals with meaning and not with plain numbers. Qualitative research can be conducted by using different sort of sources like observation, unstructured interview, group interview, collection of documentary material & so on (Dey; 1993). Hence the study employ both primary and secondary source of data.

Primary data is obtained through an in depth KII (key informant interview) by using purposive sampling technique through identifying staffs who are involved in the project identification and design of sampled project. Hence, Technical program leads, MEAL and Grant acquisition management staffs are source of information. Another data is collected from Organizations document repository that document the grant acquisition process, mainly the problem identification through Concept notes, Go/no Go decision, design workshop minute, EOI(expression of interest) and open/restricted call for proposal, proposals and communication with donors.

#### **Data Source**

The proposed data collection method is semi structured KII tool. In order to achieve the objective of the study, the researcher use both primary and secondary data source. Primary data are those data which are collected a fresh data by the researcher for the first time that are original in character (Kothari: 2004)

Primary data is collected from key technical program and Grant acquisition management (GAM) staffs, which have the highest stake. Secondary data is collected by exploring key organizational and external resources. Mainly the researcher will explore world vision DPA approach for project/program design, go-no go decisions, design workshop minutes, articles and journals.

### **3.5 Data gathering Instruments**

To get the required information for the study, the researcher used semi- structured interview techniques, due to the nature and scope of the qualitative research being descriptive study. According to Creswell, (2009) data collection with interview is useful when the respondents cannot be directly accessed; with interview, methods of data collection participants can provide historical data about the subject in detail; and with this method the researcher can control the question and the line of response to find the required data for the study. During the interview, the respondents will be informed as the data collected will be used for academic purpose and they will be encouraged for being objective in their responses since they are assured of confidentiality.

### **3.6 Sampling technique and Sample size**

The sampling design used for the research is non-probability purposive sampling. A non-probability sample that confirm to certain criteria is called purposive sampling (Adams et al; 2007). Moreover According to Creswell (2009) while using purposive sampling respondents are chosen based on their convenience and availability. Thus for the study sample were selected based on people convenience to the issue under investigation.

### **3.7 Population of the study**

The targeted population for the study are World vision staffs who have a stake in Project identification and design. The target population primarily constitute three departments tasked with project initiation- GAM (Grant Acquisition & management) MEAL and Programmes. The researcher administer semi- structured interview with 15 concerned staffs. Five Program staffs who are responsible in leading the technical aspect of the initiation, 5 MEAL and 5 GAM staffs. The researcher arranged the order of the interviewees by the assumption of their knowledge about the process.

### **3.8 Method of Data Analysis**

Data analysis consist of examining, categorizing, tabulating or otherwise recombining the evidence to address the initial proposition of the study (Yin: 1989). The analysis summarizes both the interviewee's response and the secondary source of data in a meaningful manner and

easily understandable style in a way that attempt to address initial research question. Hence, the researcher use Checklist to cross-refer response with key agreeable standards of the industry.

With respect to document analysis, it will be used to strengthen the analysis by referring different document of World vision Ethiopia & World vision international. Key documents covered are WVE's DPA guide for project/program design, selected project call for expression of interest, call for proposal, support office communicae, go/no go decision, design workshop minute, concept notes, Log frame analysis and final Project Document.

### **3.9 Ethics of Research**

Ethics refers to the appropriateness of the researcher's behavior in relation to the rights of those who become the subject of the research work or affected by it. (Saunders et al : 2009)

While conducting the study, ethical consideration were given due attention. The respondent are told the purpose of the study and asked to express their formal consent for the interview. Any social harm or embarrassment is avoided. The data collected is only be used for the study purpose and not accessible for any other purpose. However, the study result will be presented and accessible both for Graduating school and the organization under study.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This part of the discussion presents information on the current practice of project identification and Design at World vision Ethiopia. A semi-structured interview tool were used to collect data from primary sources and supplemented by organizational documents and findings from similar researches. Even though it was challenging to establish set of standardized checklist to assess performance against standard, given various projects ideas have set of different standards, I developed a checklist and asked interviews' whether elements of it exist or not in the Organizational process. This helped me to cross check the interviewers answer and clearly observe the gap within the practice.

The reliability of the reply also cross checked through review of Organizational Documents such as go no go decision, expression of interest, project design document, project implementation agreement and etc. hence this section of the paper provides analysis of the sample data. I used table to present the result together with discussion. The discussion is also supported by findings from similar studies.

#### 4.2 Current Organizational Practice of project Identification

Before proceeding to the detailed discussion of answering key Questions of the research, I found it to be crucial to understand how projects are financed at World vision Ethiopia. As would be discussed later, different mean of financing a project come up with different method of identifying and design a project. Hence, the two main source of project finance are Sponsorship and Grant. **Sponsorship funding** is a type of fund in which individual donors sponsor a child by committing monthly contribution and representative office pull together funds from thousands of donors and transfer the amount to national offices i.e. World vision Ethiopia(*the hand book for Development Programmes, WVI(2011)*). This kind of project finance source is like a regular program budget whereby the project initiation requirement is just to align project ideas with the mission of the Organization, mainly Child well-being outcomes. In such kind of funding Donor provides no specific project scope definition. On the other hand **Grants** are funds given by an Entity, public body, charitable foundation or a specialized grant making institution to an individual or another entity(usually a non-profit organization ,

sometimes a business or local government body) for a specific purpose linked to public benefit. When comes to World vision Ethiopia main source of grant financing are Government grants, UN agencies, trust funds, private companies, multilateral and bi lateral donors. Usually such kind of Grants are framed towards achieving specific objective of the donor and in some instances with recommended activities and outputs. Hence, I tried to examine the process separately.

#### 4.2.1 The Practice of Project Idea Sourcing

While examining the primary source of project idea in the organization, For Grant driven projects, almost all interviewee agree that the top 5 source of project ideas within world vision Ethiopia are as per the below diagram.



Figure 4. Source of project idea at WVE

For project driven and externally funded organization like world vision Ethiopia, chasing after the project ideas that are donor initiated is found to be the key source of project idea. According to one interviewee, “The existing modality is not new for the development sector, however, now days the interest of donors goes deep into defining the project scope, methodology and approach”. Another grant Acquisition interviewee added, “This trend has defined a new paradigm shift in project idea identification. Hence NGO’s are looking for project ideas/problems once indicated by Donor rather than analyzing and preparing project concepts that reflect the need of Program participant.” Though all interviewed staffs agree on the fact that Donor is a key stakeholder in project management, the extent of their involvement is

negatively affecting the project idea identification process- the journey of finding ideal project concept that address the true need of project participant and reflect their interest. On the contrary, according to Environment & Climate change Projects manager “ *It’s not entirely wrong for project ideas to be developed by Donors. On many instances when donors come up with project ideas, they came up with very quality one which passes through many years of experience- working with various projects, countries, advanced information, tools and resources. For instance the idea of carbo financing, directly financing by developed countries targeting community who engage in Environment rehabilitation projects in scheme called ‘ carbon sell’ would never been incepted with local capacity and community expressed need.*”

On the contrary, for sponsorship-funded projects, the primary source of project ideas to large extent is the interest of project participant as guided by the four stage of the critical path in Project development. Through the KII I have learned that the organization do have a well-articulated “*development Programmes Approach*”<sup>1</sup> which gives a detail guide on how projects are incepted and designed. Hence, the expressed and tacit need of program participants is highly likely to be captured.

Figure 12. The four stages of the Critical Path

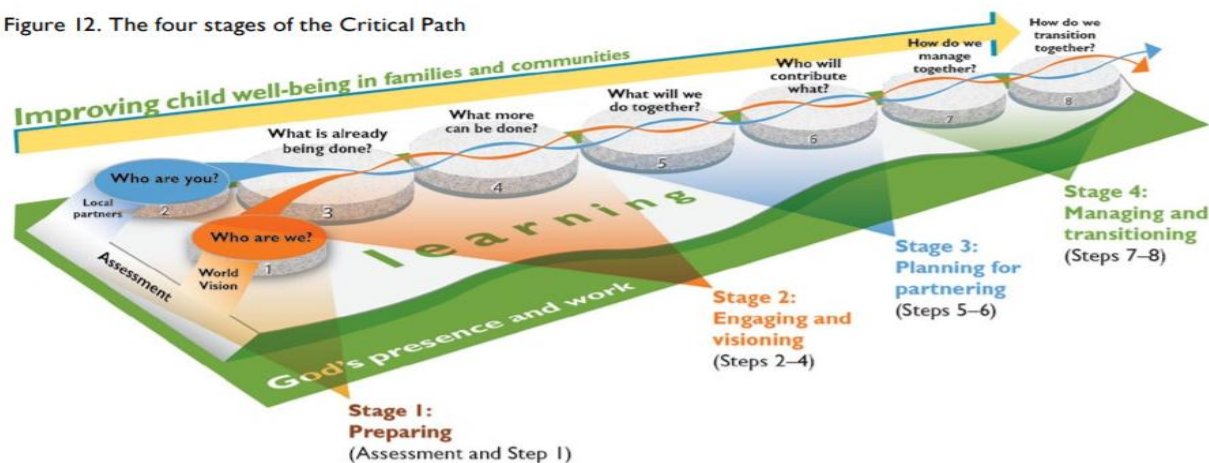


Figure 5. Critical path in project development @ World vision Ethiopia

In fact according to one interviewee from Programmes underline the reality saying “ *Given more than 70 years of experience in development projects financed through Child sponsorship, I would say the Organization do have enough tools and resources as well as the required support structure to properly identify project ideas as per the book-I mean project ideas that work for the participants, however following the Global market crush of 2008, sponsorship funding dwindle significantly and hence we turn our face to grant opportunities. Obviously our*

<sup>1</sup> The handbook for Development Programmes, World vision International(2011)

*experience in working with grant is not that much mature. Perhaps the unavailability of appropriate tool, resources and staffing might attest to this reality.”*

To sum up, the study findings indicate that the primary source of project ideas for grant-funded projects in the organization are interest of donors followed by Government policy and Organizational aspiration. Implying that, the influence of those who gives the money goes deep in to defining the problem of the targeted beneficiaries contrary to the recommended principle of capturing project ideas as told/observed from target beneficiaries. This practice is in sharp contrast to that of Sponsorship funded projects. The primary source of project idea for sponsorship-funded projects are interest of Program participant (Beneficiaries). Contrary to my findings, Firesenbet (2020) found out that 82% of NGOs project idea is primarily from Government policies and plans. Followed by multiple sources, a combination of either of these such as from Government policies and plan from technical specifications, from local leaders, from entrepreneurs, analysis of the performance of existing industries and investigation of local materials and resources.

### **4.3 Organizational Practice of assessing feasibility competing project ideas**

Table 1 presents a summary of findings with regard to how identified project ideas are assessed while building the project case- Sponsorship funded Projects.

**Table 1 the practice of assessing project idea- sponsorship funding sources**

		Checklist for Key element	Put a tick((√)) if element present and (X) if not)
<b>Sponsorship Funding Source</b>	1	The Design team collect primary data to assess the feasibility of identified project idea.	√
	2	The design team collect & Organize secondary data to assess the feasibility of identified project idea	√
	3	The design team do have standardized tool and resources to collect and organize primary/secondary data. (PRA, FGD, KII etc)	√
	4	Feasibility assessment is conducted to rate the project idea(cost-benefit analysis, cost per beneficiary analysis, admin/program ratio, etc)	X
	5	The design team engage Pertinent stakeholders in the assessment process	√
	6	There is defined Organizational process/procedure/metrics to collect assessment data.	√
	7	The organization engage competent staffs capable of collecting data with objectivity.	X
	8	Summary of assessment data is presented, validated and agreed up on by the design team	√
		<b>Total for the practice of conducting assessment- raw score</b>	<b>6 (75%)</b>

Based on the response of the interviewees and cross-referencing pertinent project document, it was observed that the practice of conducting and collecting assessment data to appraise the feasibility of project idea for sponsorship project is commendable. Hence out of the eight element in the checklist six (75 %) Elements found to be practiced.

Based on the interviewee, the Organization has a good experience of collecting primary data to assess the feasibility of project idea. Moreover, there found to be a good practice of conducting various surveys to understand the situation. In addition to that, participatory rural appraisal (PRA), Focus Group Discussion (FGD), Key informant interview (KII) and semi structured Questioner tools are used for the purpose. For sponsorship-funded projects, it is a standard to administer full-fledged survey. However, the practice of further analyzing the raw data/information to weight the advantage and disadvantage of competing ideas is missing. Appraising alternative project ideas are based on the mere practice of Pri-meditated design framework. Recommendation are made relying on experience. In addition, the organization is observed to have defined Organizational process/procedure/metrics in undertaking assessment to substantiate any project idea. Besides, the process is found to be participatory, where by key local as well as federal level stakeholders are engaged.

**Table 2 The Practice of assessing project idea- Grants**

Table 2 presents a summary of findings with regard to how identified project ideas are assessed while building the project case- Grant funded Projects

		Checklist for Key element	Put a tick((√)) if element present and (X) if not)
<b>Grant Funding Source</b>	1	The Design team collect primary data to assess the feasibility of identified project idea.	X
	2	The design team collect & Organize secondary data to assess the feasibility of identified project idea	√
	3	The design team do have standardized tool and resources to collect and organize primary/secondary data. (PRA, FGD, KII etc)	√
	4	Feasibility assessment is conducted to rate the project idea(cost-benefit analysis, cost per beneficiary analysis, admin/program ratio)	X
	5	The design team engage Pertinent stakeholders in the assessment process	X
	6	There is defined Organizational process/procedure/metrics to collect assessment data	X
	7	The organization engage competent staffs capable of collecting data with objectivity.	X
	8	Summary of assessment data is presented, validated and agreed up on by the design team	X
		<b>Total for the practice of conducting assessment- raw score</b>	<b>2(25%)</b>

As per the analysis of checklist presented above the organizational practice of assessing project ideas is very weak for grant-funded projects. Out of eight items in the checklist only two (25%) are found to be practiced.

As explained by the interviewees assessing the feasibility of project ideas is heavily relied up on secondary data. Primary data is rarely collected. Mainly associated cost and time for collecting primary data is mentioned as bottleneck.

However, the depth of this assessment heavily rely on the time given for the design team to make their business case. According to one interviewee ‘ *Collecting primary data to properly capture project participants need and validate project concept is indispensable, however it all depends on the time table provided to deliver the job. In many instances we validate project idea only through Secondary data unless specifically called by the donor to collect primary data or required ones cannot be captured through secondary data.*’

As observed through document review, Government policy and plans, Demographic surveys, Preceding projects/programmes baseline& end line, UN agencies (UNICEF, FAO, WHO, UNHCR etc.) database and subject area researches are frequently used as a secondary source of data.

On the contrary when the interviewee were asked if they analyze the raw data to assess the feasibility of the project idea Interm of cost and benefit, said it is rarely practiced. According to their response, only few donors set as a requirement to undertake cost benefit analysis before financing a project. Much of the interviewee’s response converge when asked why? “*Much of NGO work is providing public good and service which is challenging to measure the socio economic benefit gained. Hence, often times, it is the cost per beneficiary parameter that is used to weight the efficiency of project idea and make comparative inquiry.*”

On the other hand, regardless of the various practices exhibited in the organization, as observed through document review, there is no guidance, organizational process and procedures to guide the collection of assessment data for Grant Projects. As outline in the previous discussion, sponsorship projects do have a complete guide from inception through evaluation. Hence, lack of Organizational process in this regard opened up a door for variability in the assessment of feasibility of project idea.

Moreover, according to the interviewee the organization lacks the practice of presenting assessment data and validating through wide stakeholders participation. No record was found to

evidence the collected assessment data and preliminary analysis have wide stakeholders consent. This gives a room to manipulate the data intentionally or due to personal biasness. Hence reviewed project document reveal that the practice of involving stakeholders in the process of gathering assessment data is only limited to field level data collection.

To summarize, the study indicate that the practice of assessing feasible project idea is incomplete only limited to cementing a preferential project idea Pri-meditated in the thought of project designers. No appraisal tool is found to be fully deployed ultimately limiting key project stakeholders (donor, government or peer organizations) compare and contrast the benefit of any project against the cost. Moreover, the process does not give any guarantee that the selected project idea is among the best from the existing alternatives. Such practices might undermine the probability of the project idea being successfully implemented.

#### 4.4 Organizational Practice of analyzing Project Ideas

In development project context, Once assessment data's are collected, it is customary to conduct at least three types of analysis: - Problem, objective and stakeholders. To unpack & scrutinize the practice, the three analysis are separately presented in light of differed funding sources.

##### 4.4.1 Organizational Practice of conducting Problem analysis

Table 3 summarizes the study findings with regard to specific activities/tasks exercised while conducting Problem analysis- sponsorship funded projects

**Table 3 the practice of conducting Problem analysis- sponsorship funding source**

Sponsorship Funding Source		Checklist for Key element	Put a tick((√)) if element present and (X) if not
	1	Projects keep exhausting list of community problems form which a priority is chosen	√
	2	Community problems are systematically analyzed with deployment of recommended tools and resources	√
	3	The effect of the problem to the community are analyzed	√
	4	Problem analysis is undertaken by competent staff/professional	√
	5	Key stakeholders are involved in problem analysis	√
		<b>Total for the practice of problem analysis- Raw score</b>	<b>5(100%)</b>

Out of the five element in the checklist that aims to assess the existing practice of problem analysis, five of the element (100%) are operational. Indicating that this is one of the strength area of the organization.

As per the interviewee opinion, for sponsorship-funded opportunities, projects undertake a deep root cause analysis soliciting it with existing context. Hence exhaustive list of problems are developed in alignment with its effect on project participants well bigness. As per one interviewee, *“Even though now there are sporadic practice of “Appreciative inquiry”, community level problem tree development with Focal Group Discussion setting has been instrumental approach of understanding community need.”* Hence, there exist a systematic approach to identify problem, provide analysis and intended effect is projected.

With regard to the tools and resources, the interviewee unanimously responded/confirmed the availability of various resources that facilitate the process of systematically capturing problem, prioritizing them and analyzing their root cause and logical link. In fact the process is observed to have a proper stakeholder participation and say.

**Table 4. Organizational Practice of Conducting Problem analysis- Grants**

Table 4 summarizes the study findings with regard to specific activities/tasks exercised while conducting Problem analysis- Grant funded projects

Grant Funding Source		Checklist for Key element	Put a tick((√)) if element present and (X) if not)
	1	Projects keep exhausting list of community problems form which a priority is chosen	X
	2	Community problems are systematically analyzed with deployment of recommended tools and resources	√
	3	The effect of the problem to the community are analyzed	√
	4	Problem analysis is undertaken by competent staff/professional	√
	5	Key stakeholders are involved in problem analysis	X
		<b>Total for the practice of problem analysis- Raw score</b>	<b>3 (60%)</b>

With regard to the Organizational practice of undertaking comprehensive problem analysis for Grant funded projects, three of the five elements (60%) in the check list are practiced- indication of another area of improvement.

As observed from interviewee response, Grant funded opportunities do not keep exhaustive list of community problem, as majority of them are framed towards specific problem in the first place. The donor usually defines the problem and projects are designed in response to that. Hence, there is no need of assessing variety of problem exhibited within the community. However, whosoever defines the problem; it was observed that project design team conduct a comprehensive and systematic problem analysis utilizing recommended tools. In addition, competent professionals undertake the problem analysis for grant-funded opportunities. As underlined by one interviewee “*calculating the probability of winning we may even hire a consultant to lead the process*”.

Contrary to the need to relevant stakeholders in the process, grant funded opportunities barely involve stakeholders while conducting problem analysis.

However, from interviewees response it was learned that the intensity of problem analysis and the application of tools and resources is rigorous and high for Sponsorship funded projects than Grants.

The study findings indicate that key aspect of the problem analysis are in one way or the other practiced which would Pri-position the Organization to develop a succinct project strategy and ultimately project success. The study finding align with Henry (2016) finding which conclude that effective problem analysis process during project identification process influence success of the project to a great extent. Moreover, The findings also concurred with Thomas & Mullaly, Shi, (2011) proper analysis of the problem that the project intends to address and that improving project success in organizations is assumed to be made through project management improvement initiatives, which include the process of analyzing the main problems in the community and project organizations using various available tools and techniques including the problem tree technique and the fish bone analysis among others.

#### 4.5 Organizational Practice of Conducting Objective analysis

Table 5 summarizes the study findings with regard to specific activities/tasks exercised while conducting Objective analysis- Sponsorship funded projects

**Table 5. The practice of undertaking objective analysis- Sponsorship funded projects**

Sponsorship Funding Source		Checklist for Key element	Put a tick((√)) if element present and (X) if not
	1	Main Objective is usually drawn from problem analysis	X
	2	The means to the desired situation is properly identified and analyzed	X
	3	Projects use appropriate tools and resources to convert problems in to Objectives	√
	4	Objective analysis is undertaken by subject matter specialist	X
	5	The project strategy is always drawn from the analysis	X
	6	The design team develops comprehensive theory of change(ToC)	√
	7	Key Stakeholders are involved in the Objective analysis	√
	<b>Total for the practice of Objective analysis- raw score</b>	<b>2(42.8 %)</b>	

Out of the five elements in the checklist to assess the organizational practice of making Objective analysis for sponsorship funding sources, only three (42.8%) elements was existed- an indication to the additional grey area for improvement.

According to the interviewers response there exist a lot of gap while converting problem analysis in to Objective tree due to competing departmental interest. Objective setting exercise usually curves the program/project chosen methodology to be employed if it is financed. According to one interviewee *“department’s fight to twist the objective towards their end. There are a lot of instances where wrong objective was set for the right problem,”* another interviewee added *‘hence it is at this stage the interest of key stakeholders mainly the donor and strategy development department take part in with different interest.’* Hence, often time’s objectives are not drawn in concordance with the problem analyzed.

As per the response from the interviewee, the means to the desired situation is merely analyzed. In their response, the key problem is the organizations Project model based approach where by sets of recommended and tested project models are there as a panacea for defined sets of problems. Whatever the Objective analysis might indicate, the desired situation is seen only in

light of the Organizations experience and interest compromising the Objectivity of the analysis itself.

Again when comes to the project strategy, the interviewee unanimously agree that projects strategy is not drawn from the analysis. However, it does not mean that completely unrelated project strategy would be recommended for a given analysis, but rather the organization has a set of option, called project Models, where by all project strategies should align themselves to. As per one interviewee explanation, “The organization has already defined key area of intervention and the how part is project model based. On the contrary different situation demands different mix of intervention as indicated by the objective analysis. We usually are forced to compromise the objective analysis in order to align ourselves with the organizations strategic Pillars”

When come to the availability of tools and resources to undertake proper objective analysis almost all interviewee agreed on its availability with variety of options.

#### **Table 6 Organizational Practice of Conducting Objective Analysis- Grants**

Table 6 summarizes the study findings with regard to specific activities/tasks exercised while conducting Objective analysis- Grant funded projects

Grant funding Source		Checklist for Key element	Put a tick((√)) if element present and (X) if not
	1	Main Objective is usually drawn from problem analysis	√
	2	The means to the desired situation is properly identified and analyzed	√
	3	Projects use appropriate tools and resources to convert problems in to Objectives	√
	4	Objective analysis is undertaken by subject matter specialist	√
	5	The project strategy is always drawn from the analysis	X
	6	The design team develops comprehensive theory of change(ToC)	√
	7	Key Stakeholders are involved in the Objective analysis	X
	<b>Total for the practice of Objective analysis- raw score</b>	<b>5 (71.4</b>	<b>%)</b>

For grant funding sources, the organization practice of undertaking objective analysis is commendable as compared against the checklist. Out of the seven elements five (71.4%) are found to be practiced.

As captured from interviewee and document review, unlike the sponsorship funding sources, the objective analysis for grant projects closely reflect the finding of problem analysis. Hence, grant designs properly identify and analyze the means to the desired situation. One interviewee says *'trying your level best in maintain objectivity in grant design is not only an option but compulsory. Otherwise, you would not get your project funded. Furthermore, now a time much of grant opportunities come up with recommended objective and target by the donor, which leave no room to tweak objectives towards anyone's interest'*

As compared to sponsorship-funded projects, the extent of engaging stakeholders in objective analysis is missing. As observed from the interview, objective analysis is done with exclusive involvement of Organization staff. Moreover, no validation of objectives is observed with wider stakeholders group resulting weak community ownership of project objectives as observed by one interviewee.

The findings for both sponsorship as well as grant-funded projects attest to the fact that having a comprehensive problem analysis with the participation of relevant stakeholders is no guarantee for smooth Objective analysis and subsequent setting of Project framework. Hence keeping key stakeholders throughout the designing process is crucial in maintaining the rationality of Project design.

#### **4.6 Organizational Practice of Stakeholders Engagement in Identification & Design**

According to PMBOK (2013) a stakeholder is an individual, group or Organization who may affect, be affected by, or perceive itself to be affected by a decision, activity, or outcome of a project. Stakeholders may be actively involved in the project or have interest that may be positively or negatively affected by the performance or completion of the Project. For development projects the role of stakeholders is indispensable (PM4DP; 2010).

**Table 7 Organizational practice of Engaging Stakeholders- Sponsorship funded projects**

Sponsorship Funding Sources	Checklist for Key element		Put a tick((√)) if element present and (X) if not)
	1	The Organization always conducts Stakeholder mapping during project initiation	√
	2	The organization do keep clear list of each stakeholders. i.e. stakeholders register	√
	3	Stakeholder participation is always encouraged at the project initiation stage	√
	4	The organization uses proper tools and resources to capture the need of stakeholders (problem prioritization, force field analysis, mind mapping, vulnerability matrix etc.)	√
	5	The needs of each stakeholder is analyzed and identified clearly before the project	√
	6	The Organization develop Strategies to address the needs of each stakeholders	X
	7	There is communication with different stakeholders like local government, community members and etc.	√
	8	Initial understanding and agreements on The projects was made by the stakeholders	√
	9	There is equal emphasis for all stakeholders	X
<b>Total for Stakeholders engagement in initiation &amp; design- row score</b>		<b>7(77.7%)</b>	

According to the interviewee response and a due revision of project initiation documents, it was observed that the organization practice towards engaging stakeholders in project initiation and design is strong. Hence, out of the nine elements in the checklist to assess the effectiveness of stakeholder’s engagement, six (77.7%) of the element existed.

In general as per the interviewee response and document review, it was observed that the primary aspect of stakeholder engagement is well practiced. Give the time frame the project development team is given, There is good practice of mapping out key stakeholders, keeping registry and involving them in key assessments like vulnerability assessment, problem tree development, pairwise ranking and Participatory rural appraisal. Even more for sponsorship-funded projects, the stakeholders not only participate in project invitation but to the extent of leading the process. According to WVI handbook for Development Programmes (2011) *“In the second stage of the critical path, WV staff engage with community and local stakeholders to find out who they are and what is currently being done to improve child well-being and to address vulnerability in the area.... This typically co facilitated by WV and other local*

stakeholders committed to child-well-being in order to ensure that it is locally owned and led rather than driven by WV.” Hence as per the response of the interviewee and document review, especially those who engage in designing sponsorship funded projects, the direction, tools and resources provided by the guide is followed with only small misalignments.

On the other hand, with regard to systematically capturing and analyzing the interest of stakeholders in project initiation and design the organization have a good practice of utilizing pairwise ranking and make appropriate documentation for reference. According to one interviewee, “this would be Program design audit issue” if not evidenced up on request.

Having initial impression through interview of key personnel, when referring some project initiation documents and final proposal, the Organization have no developed strategy how to manage each stakeholder. As underlined previously, Even though stakeholders are engaged in the identification process I could not find any written document or indication from the interviewee about the availability of stakeholder management plan. Moreover, it was observed that there is a big biasness toward the weight given to each stakeholders. Donors, Government and beneficiaries having the most attention and private sector players being the least.

**Table 8 Organizational Practice of Engaging Stakeholders- Grants**

Grant Funding Sources	Checklist for Key element		Put a tick((√)) if element present and (X) if not)
	1	The Organization always conducts Stakeholder mapping during project initiation	X
	2	The organization do keep clear list of each stakeholders. i.e. stakeholders register	X
	3	Stakeholder participation is always encouraged at the project initiation stage	√
	4	The organization uses proper tools and resources to capture the need of stakeholders (problem prioritization, force field analysis, mind mapping, vulnerability matrix etc.)	X
	5	The needs of each stakeholder is analyzed and identified clearly before the project	X
	6	The Organization develop Strategies to address the needs of each stakeholders	X
	7	There is communication with different stakeholders like local government, community members and etc.	√
	8	Initial understanding and agreements on The projects was made by the stakeholders	√
	9	There is equal emphasis for all stakeholders	X
	<b>Total for Stakeholders engagement in initiation &amp; design- row score</b>	<b>3 (33.3%)</b>	

In sharp contrast to sponsorship-funded projects, the practice of engaging stakeholders for grant funding sources is very poor. As I capture it from the interviewee, only three elements are practiced out of nine (33.3%), indicating the fact that there is a lot to improve in that regard.

The respondent say they rarely practice stakeholders mapping and keeping on their registry as Project initiation standard, often times if it is the requirement of the donor. However counterbalancing the argument the issue of time was raised for this element not to be practiced. According to one interviewee *“often time we skip some critical aspect of the project design that need stakeholder’s engagement. This is because most grant calls and Request for Expression of interest have a very short life span that need prompt response. You either try to develop a concept from your experience, that you think will address the need of project stakeholders or fail to submit and declined the opportunity. Given the competitiveness of the sector we usually choose the first one.”*

However as captured in the checklist, stakeholders participation is always encourages at project initiation, given limited cost and time allotted for the purpose. As one interviewee recalls it *“ we know the importance of engaging stakeholders in every aspect of project initiation, however there is no earmarked budget reserved for the task, and there is a tendency of being reserved not to spend for a project concept you are not sure of winning.”*

The only stakeholder group whose need is properly analyzed in the project beneficiary. Hence, the need of each stakeholders is not properly analyzed before the project. Hence similar to the sponsorship project Grant funded projects does not prepare a strategy to manage potential stakeholders.

On the other hand, as confirmed by interviewees, Projects do communicate stakeholders the Project concept and initial Memorandum of understanding serves as a communication document.

The findings on World vision Ethiopia practice strongly aligns with the practice in other NGOs. According to Firesenbet (2020), 78.6% of the respondent agree and 21.4% strongly agree in the NGOs that Stakeholders Identification and Engagements is part of the project identification and design Process. Moreover in the study conducted by Henry (2016) that asses the influence of project identification process on Performance of TVET project in Kenya, found out that Stakeholder’s participation leads to identification of relevant gaps in the community implying the fact that the stakeholders involvement in TVET project identification influences success of

the project to a great extent. The finding is similar with Firesenbet (2020) and Persson (2004) who found out that stakeholder are vital to the successful completion of Project because their unwillingness to continuously support the Objective of project leads many projects to fail.

#### **4.7 Key Challenges in project identification and design**

From the qualitative data collected and document reviewed, the issues discussed below are key challenges while undertaking project identification and design. For clarity purpose I summarized the response under two major category; - Internal and External

**1. External challenges;** - these are challenges that the process of project identification frequently encountered with because of factors that come from outside of the organization. Under this category Requirement of Donors, absence of clear Policy and strategy, absence of key information and capacity of local government are outlined.

**a. Requirement of Donors:** - theoretically speaking project ideas for development sector need to have a proper participation of the beneficiary group. However as noted by the interviewees, now a days every aspect of the project design is a replica of donor understanding of the situation. They not only give the framework and the budget which the project need to address, but to the extent of defining project methodology, outcome, output and activities irrespective of the variability of context the project needs to be adopted. Such kind of increasing trend compromises the professional and objective process of identifying and analysis of problem and subsequently development of objective solution. As one interviewee observed, *“Given the competitiveness of the sector, we are now focusing on identifying a project idea that donors like instead of solving grass root level problem.”*

**b. Absence of exhaustive National policy and plan;**- According to the observation of the interviewee, there need to be a broad national level plan and strategy in every thematic area where the project design team formulate and source its project idea from. The government have the capacity to conduct broad assessment by engaging appropriate stakeholders and indicate areas that need project intervention. However, project ideas are not triangulated in light of broader national policy and standard if they pause adversarial effect. According to one interviewee observation

*“it’s perplexing to know that even for policies and strategies that exist regional and zonal level understanding is diverse opening doors to design a project that only fit the interest of small group, detached from the big picture”*

**C. Absence of key Data & Information for Decision Making:** another key challenge in project identification and design is the absence of key data that helps to conduct succinct analysis of the problem. Though different interviewee mentioned different block of data in their working areas but key data communal for problem analysis like Socio economic & political, Geospatial, vulnerability, fragility, gender, disability, environmental, Livelihood, infrastructure and demographic data are hard to grasp from credible sources. Hence, due to this problem, in most cases the design team fail to make proper analysis of the problem and provide appropriate solution.

**D. Capacity of Local Government;-** most of the interviewee raise the challenge posed by the limited capacity of local government. Majority of the organizations project are designed for district level intervention and local government is a key player in the design phase. Hence often times, there lack a proper capacity, willingness and to some extent biasness when engaged project design. One Interviewee recall his experience of working with local authorities by saying...*while we were designing a sponsorship project in Harerge, one Zonal government leader were very influential and aggressive when we were analyzing project intervention area...unfortunately through pairwise ranking his proposed area were not chosen. He trashed the whole analysis and escalate the situation further by saying...we do not want this project. We later learn that his proposed area of intervention is his birthplace.*”

**2. Internal Challenge:-** these are the summary of challenges raised by the interviewee that are I categorized it to be internal. These are the challenges that comes out of structural, individual as well as defective process that exist with the organization

**a. Reactive Project identification strategy:-** The organization does not undergoes through preparation of project ideas and concepts prior to any funding opportunity- this approach gave a room for scope creep in tailoring projects ideas towards the funders need. The existing organizational apparatus does not encourage field practitioners to observe, analyses trends and develop a project ideas from existing reality. Instead, project ideas are sought after once the organization decides to go for a funding opportunity. There is no culture of proactively preparing a concept that is free from funder’s bias.

**b. “Interdepartmental competition”:-** as outlined in the objective analysis section key grant acquisition personals agree on the fact that project design phase, mainly objective setting , is conducted under the heavy burden of departmental interest. The objective analysis section of the design would have a direct resource implication towards competing departments. Hence you may find project recommended objective that by far align with the problem analysis.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

This chapter presents the Discussion of key findings, conclusion drawn from the findings and recommendation made there to. The conclusions and recommendations drawn are in quest of addressing the purpose of this study.

#### **5.1 Summary of Basic Findings**

In this study, I tried to assess the practice of project identification and Design at World vision Ethiopia in light of some key parameter used in the development practitioners world. Mainly I used key parameter of;-process of project idea identification, how the feasibility of identified idea is assessed, how and to what extent stakeholders are engaged, practice of problem and Objective analysis, objectivity of the process and finally the challenge with regard to identification and design.

Hence, data collected through semi-structured interview and document review was analyzed deploying descriptive approach. Finally, the researcher come up with the following key summary findings.

The first step in the process that I examined is how and from where a project idea comes from. Based on the findings obtained from the interviewee, for grant-funded projects the primary source of project idea is the interest of Donors, followed by Government policy and plan. On the contrary, the analysis of Sponsorship funded projects points to the fact that much of project idea are articulated as expressed by the interest of project/program participants. In support of the aforementioned reality, Document review findings suggest that sponsorship funded projects do have exhaustive, well-actuated, tested tools and resources that dictate project identification and design process. Whereas for grant funded projects no defined process steps, tools & resources and a documented Grant acquisition strategy is found, leaving an open space to be reactive that proactive. However, it is noted that when saying interest of donor or government policy or project participant interest it is meant for the weight given for each factor. No single factor was mentioned as the only source of project idea.

Based on the result towards the Organizational practice of assessing the feasibility of project idea, it is found that the organization do have a good practice of collecting primary as well as

secondary data by involving pertinent stakeholders. However, the interviewee do acknowledge and did not mention any tool to undertake feasibility assessment to compare the effectiveness and efficiency of one project idea from the other. The only assessment undertaken as per the finding is cost per beneficiary assessment- often times the requirement of donors. Primary and secondary data are collected only to engage stakeholders and understand the problem further. Beside Grant funded projects does not practice presenting assessment data, validating and developing a consent form with the wider stakeholder.

Based on the finding, the organization performs well in the analysis it undertakes to understand the problem. It develops exhaustive list of problems by Engaging community members, conduct analysis through recommended tools like root cause analysis through involving pertinent stakeholders. The organization also performs well in analyzing the projected impact of the problem. As confirmed by the interviewee, the holistic impact of a problem is properly analyzed.

Contrary to the succinct analysis and objectivity towards conducting problem analysis, the organizations practice of Objective analysis is highly compromised and is akin to subjectivity. As observed through interviewee response against the checklist, ranges of options provided analogues to any give problem through objective analysis, does not properly address the problem. However proper tools and resources are usually deployed to conduct the analysis. Even more design teams often develop Theory of change while depicting its case. As noted by the interviewee, given the resource implication the objective analysis would have the final framework usually reflect the competing interest of departments, donors and senior leadership. The other problem in Objective analysis is absence of competent staff properly equipped with the knowledge, skill, tools and experience. It is observed that staffs academic background and area of expertise creates a personal biasness if not supplemented by tools that ensure objectivity.

With regard to the involvement of stakeholders in project identification and design, it is observed that the organization practice towards engaging stakeholders in project initiation and design is promising but not enough. The organization do have a good practice of mapping out key stakeholders relevant for the project and keep them in registry. Moreover, document review reveal that stakeholders are encouraged to contribute their thought in initiation stage. Beside, Stakeholder's engagement is managed by utilizing recommended tools like power- interest grid.

However, the major bottleneck of this practice is that not all stakeholders are given equal weight and no strategy is developed how to manage them. Review of operational projects document indicate that there are some attempts to devise a strategy to manage stakeholders despite being there just to fulfill a requirement.

Looking at the overall challenge of the organization while project identification and design, the analysis reveal that are mainly external. As elaborated by the interviewee: - narrow requirement by donors, Absence of exhaustive Government policy & Plan, absence of data for coherent analysis & decision-making and low capacity of local government to be the major one. On the other hand, internal challenge like Interdepartmental competition for resource and reactive grant acquisition strategy compromise the process.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

“Failing to plan is planning to fail”. Project identification and design is the most crucial step in project life cycle management. Hence, one of the main reasons for project failure in developing countries is lack of effective project identification & Design process (Richard 2012).

World vision Ethiopia is among the leading Non-Government Organization (NGO) in Ethiopia running more than 300 projects across the country. In fact, the variability of funding sources & Interest of donors, frequently changing nature of Development projects and the socio economic and political dynamic of the country called upon a project identification strategy capable of aligning itself to the change.

As a general Observation, the Organization do give proper attention for project identification and design. This can be evidenced by the existence of two dedicated departments (grant acquisition and MEAL) in addition to unreserved support of Technical team in every aspect. Hence, Project identification, design passes through a collaborative exercise of various subject matter specialist, and grant acquisition personnel.

In the Organization Project identification and design is considered to be of high significance. It is not undertaken for the mere purpose fulfilling formality; in fact, it is a matter of developing a winning idea among dozens of competitors. The massive documented resources and amount of projects it manage to get funding for can confirm this.

With regard to source of project idea, it was noted that the influence of donors and their extent of involvement is deepening from time to time. The organization neither develop a project acquisition strategy nor use existing mission statement documents to mitigate such king of

intervention. The mere need to getting project financed, at times found to be at the cost of mission drift.

Even though there are area of improvement, the organization showed a remarkable performance in its engagement of stakeholders while developing project idea. Hence, at time, stakeholders took the facilitation role by themselves.

With various degree of plausibility, the organization do undertake a problem and objective analysis. The problem of subjectivity is observed for sponsorship-funded projects where as in grant-funded project it is minimal.

Finally, the organization neither have the tool nor exercise a feasibility study for development projects. Merly setting of intended target, cost per beneficiary analysis is used to appraise the feasibility of any project.

### **5.3 Recommendation**

As the major objective of the study is to assess the practice of Project identification and design of World vision Ethiopia, the following recommendations are presented in concordance with the key findings mentioned above

1. The Organization do have a different project identification and design processes and methodology that align with project funding source. It is found that project identification and design of projects from sponsorship funding is well structured, bottom-up, properly engage stakeholders, have a well-established tools and resources and the necessary organizational structure to support the process. On the contrary Project identification & design for Grant funded projects are mostly donor driven, dynamic in nature, semi-structured tools and resources and loose stakeholder engagement.

As the organization project financing structure is changing from Sponsorship to grants, the necessary processed, structure, tools& resources, standards need to be developed to the new paradigm. Just like the well-developed project identification and design guideline that are in place for sponsorship-funded projects, a general directives and process should also need to be in place for grant-funded projects.

2. For development organization like world vision Ethiopia accommodating the interest of donors is not optional, however their extent of involvement in defining and framing the interest

of beneficiaries, devising project strategy and setting project targets needs organizational & systematic check. Not all donors have holly purpose.

3. The organization should keep its good practice of engaging stakeholders in project identification and design with certain degree of improvement for grant-funded projects. However, the practice of developing stakeholder management plan is yet to improve for both funding sources. The study further recommend that the good practice of stakeholders co leading project identification process for sponsorship funding projects should be promoted across the organization in light of creating community ownership and ensuring sustainability.

4. Even though tools and resources Intarms of measuring the feasibility of projects in the development arena are not an extensive as that of profit making, the organization need to have a strategy to appraise the feasibility of projects before going to design and subsequently implementation.

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## Appendix A- Interview Guide

### 1. General Questions

1.1 Please state your role in the Organization and in what way you are related to Project Identification and Design?

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1.2 Could you tell us your academic Background\_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Assessments of current Project Identification and design Practice

#### 2.1 Assessments on how project Ideas are Identified

2.1.1 What are the primary sources of project ideas in your organization? (I.e. Govt policy, program participant need, strategic aspiration, interest of donor etc.)

2.1.2 Does the Organization have a defined process in the identification and development of project idea?

2.1.3 Does the organization have specific tools and resources that guide project idea identification process?

2.1.4 Do you think required organizational structure and process are installed to capture workable project ideas?

#### 2.2 Assessment of how competing project ideas are assessed?

2.2.1 Does the organization collect primary data to validate the feasibility of the project idea? If yes with what tool?

(checklist: Brainstorming, Affinity diagrams ,FGD ,Participatory rural appraisal ,Mind mapping ,Venn diagrams Locality mapping, Semi-structured interviews ,KII, Ranking exercises Knowledge, practice and coverage surveys, Standardized tests, Standardized observation instruments, Anthropometric measurements)

2.2.2 Does the organization collect secondary data to assess the feasibility of the project idea?

2.2.3 Does the organization have specific tools and resources to conduct feasibility assessment (checklist i.e PRA, Livelihood analysis, gender analysis, CVCA etc.)?

2.2.4 Do you think organization involve relevant stakeholders in data collection ?

### **2.3 Assessment of how Project Ideas are analyzed**

#### **Stakeholder analysis**

2.3.1 Is stakeholder identification part of project identification Process?

2.3.2. Does the Organization have a clear stakeholder register?

2.3.3 Does the Organization involve sufficient stakeholders in the project identification process? If yes how? (Stakeholder consultation meeting, KII,FGD , community engagement, resource mapping, problem analysis)

2.3.4. Does the organization have proper tools and resources to retrieve the need of the stakeholders? (While identifying problems, problem prioritization, force field analysis, mind mapping, vulnerability matrix etc)

2.3.5 Does the organization deploy PM tools to analyze the need of stakeholders? If yes, could you mention some? (Venn diagram, stakeholder's matrix etc.)

2.3.6. Does the Organization develop strategies to address the need of each stakeholders? Could you mention some of the strategies? (Checklist i.e. power interest grid)

2.3.7 Do stakeholders participate in the problem validation process?

2.3.8. Does the organization document stakeholders consent?

#### **Problem analysis?**

2.3.9. Do you think problems at community level are exhaustively explored?

2.3.10. Do you think problems coming from the community are properly analyzed?

2.3.11. What problem analysis tool did you deploy to analyze assessment data?

2.3.12. Do you think technically competent staffs undertake problem analysis?

### **Objective analysis**

2.3.11. When you do objective analysis (select project objectives among alternatives) what consideration did you make in decision making ?

(checklist: need prioritization, external program consideration, appropriateness, institutional capacity, resource availability, economic feasibility, sustainability, internal program consideration, portfolio consideration)

## **3. Objectivity of Identification and design Process**

3.1. Do you think project ideas are defined objectively? Is the process transparent enough?

3.2 While designing a project did donors, government stakeholders, and senior leaders negatively influenced you? If yes, which stakeholder group is most influential? Why?

3.3. Does the Organization have appropriate tools and resources to manage personal biasness in project design?

3.4 Were you given enough time and resource to develop a comprehensive project design?

- In your opinion what are the main challenges and grey area in project identification and design process?
- In your opinion what are the critical success factors in successful project identification and design?

## Appendix B- Checklist

The Objective of the checklist is to cross check respondents answer against industry standard recommended activities, processes and practices. This checklist is developed with reference to recommended standard of project identification and design practice.

### 1. Checklist one: Organizational Practice of assessing feasibility of alternative Project idea

	Checklist for Key element	Put a tick((√)) if element present and (X) if not)
1	The Design team collect primary data to assess the feasibility of identified project idea.	
2	The design team collect & Organize secondary data to assess the feasibility of identified project idea.	
3	The design team do have standardized tool and resources to collect and organize primary/secondary data. (PRA, FGD, KII etc)	
4	Feasibility assessment is conducted to rate the project idea(cost- benefit analysis, cost per beneficiary analysis, admin/program ratio, etc)	
5	The design team engage Pertinent stakeholders in the assessment process	
6	There is defined Organizational process/procedure/metrics to collect assessment data	
7	The organization engage competent staffs capable of collecting data with objectivity.	
8	Summary of assessment data is presented, validated and agreed up on by the design team	

		<b>Total for the practice of conducting assessment- raw score</b>	

**Checklist 2: Organizational practice of undertaking Problem analysis**

		Checklist for Key element	Put a tick((√)) if element present and (X) if not)
1		Projects keep exhausting list of community problems form which a priority is chosen	
2		Community problems are systematically analyzed with deployment of recommended tools and resources	
3		The effect of the problem to the community are analyzed	
4		Problem analysis is undertaken by competent staff/professional	
5		Key stakeholders are involved in problem analysis	
		<b>Total for the practice of problem analysis- Raw score</b>	

**Checklist 3: Organizational Practice of undertaking Objective analysis**

		Checklist for Key element	Put a tick((√)) if element present and (X) if not)

1	Main Objective is usually drawn from problem analysis	
2	The means to the desired situation is properly identified and analyzed	
3	Projects use appropriate tools and resources to convert problems in to Objectives	
4	Objective analysis is undertaken by subject matter specialist	
5	The project strategy is always drawn from the analysis	
6	The design team develops comprehensive theory of change(ToC)	
7	Key Stakeholders are involved in the Objective analysis	
	<b>Total for the practice of Objective analysis- raw score</b>	

**Checklist 4: Organizational practice of Engaging Stakeholders in project identification & design**

	Checklist for Key element	Put a tick((√)) if element present and (X) if not)
1	The Organization always conducts Stakeholder mapping during project initiation	
2	The organization do keep clear list of each stakeholders. i.e. stakeholders register	
3	Stakeholder participation is always encouraged at the project initiation stage	
4	The organization uses proper tools and resources to capture the need of stakeholders (problem prioritization, force field analysis, mind mapping, vulnerability matrix etc.)	

5	The needs of each stakeholder is analyzed and identified clearly before the project		
6	The Organization develop Strategies to address the needs of each stakeholders		
7	There is communication with different stakeholders like local government, community members and etc.		
8	Initial understanding and agreements on The projects was made by the stakeholders		
9	There is equal emphasis for all stakeholders		
	<b>Total for Stakeholders engagement in initiation &amp; design- row score</b>		